Secure Computing

Physical security

Portable devices such as laptops are particularly vulnerable to theft, loss, and resale, and should be properly secured with a lock. Most laptops and desktop computers have built-in slots made to connect with a cable lock. These locks are available at most computer stores.

The general recommendations for physical security are the same for all devices, particularly smaller devices like laptops, hard disks, smartphones, music players, and flash drives:

- Never leave your laptop or small devices unattended, even for a moment, even in your office. Most laptops are stolen from their owner's office, while the owner is at a quick break or meeting.
- If you must leave your laptop in a car, stow your bag in the trunk before you reach your destination, so potential thieves don't see you. Make sure your car is locked.
- Use a low-key shoulder bag, briefcase, or backpack for your laptop. Avoid expensive bags that scream, "Laptop inside!"
- Do not leave portable electronic equipment unattended when traveling. Monitor it closely while checking in at an airport or hotel counter and while passing through airport security checkpoints. If you must leave the equipment briefly unattended in a hotel room, secure it to a desk or table with a cable lock or keep it in a hotel provided safe if available.
- If you are going out for coffee or lunch, lock your gear in a desk or an office that can be locked. Or, at least purchase and use a laptop cable lock.
- When traveling by air, bring the portable IT equipment with you on the airplane as a carry-on. Do not place it in checked luggage.
- All computers should be set to require a user password to log on to the computer.
- Configure your Macintosh or Windows screensaver to require a password.
- If you have a multifunction printer (MFP) or multifunction device (MFD) that incorporates the functionality of multiple devices (e.g., printer, scanner, photocopier, fax, email) used to manage unencrypted Yale 2-Lock or 3-Lock data, please contact the Help Desk for help protecting the data stored in these devices.
- It's always a good idea to secure a laptop to a desk or table with a cable lock, even at home.

Secure the locations of mobile devices as well, and remember access control procedures:

- Regularly review people who have key, swipe, PIN card access to your work area.
- Change PINs regularly, and remove unneeded access privileges when people leave their positions.
- Know who has access to enable/disable fire doors.
- Provide locks on each office in your area, not just the general area.
- Create procedures to coordinate physical security options for buildings not owned by the University.

Security Recommendation Matrix

Requiring minimum security (no secure data stored locally)	Requiring most security (ePHI, HIPAA, single source, financial data, confidential info)
Laptops docked *(home and office only)*	**Laptops docked** *(home and office only)*
• S.T.O.P. Program	• S.T.O.P. Program
• Security cable	• Security cable
• Locking screen saver	• Locking screen saver
	• Backup service
	• Computrace
Laptops mobile *(always on the move)*	**Laptops mobile** *(always on the move)*
• S.T.O.P. Program	• S.T.O.P. Program
• Security cable	• Security cable
• Locking screen saver	• Locking screen saver
• BIOS level password	• Backup service
	• Computrace
	• Password organizer
PDA and smart phones	**PDA and smart phones**
• S.T.O.P. Program	• S.T.O.P. Program
• BIOS level password	• BIOS level password
	• Password protection w/data destroy options

Lost/stolen electronic media or computing device

If you need to report lost or stolen electronic media or a computing device please complete our lost/stolen device form and send it to security@yale.edu.

Physical Security for Desktops

Physical Security for Laptops

Physical Security for Mobile Devices

Physical Security for Peripherals

Need Help?

Call Us
Email Us
Visit Us
Getting Help

See Also

ITS to Decommission Websense in January

(Submitted by Tom Castiello, IT Strategic Business Analyst, Information Security Office)

On January 31, 2013, Yale ITS will...

learn more ...

Security Tip

Back Up Your Data

Backup your data regularly to an external hard drive or online. You'll be protected from hard drive failures and laptop theft.
Read more...

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